202 In the afternoon I nearly lost my way among the trails leading to the village. The Maué Indians who accompanied me, as well as the guide and the interpreter, had forged ahead, leaving me behind with two companions, and had already reached the maloca while I still attempted with difficulty to find my way, guided only by the sound of a horn which I could hear somewhere ahead of me.

It was a Mundurucu Indian from Necodemos, who had generously come to meet me, and who blew on his instrument to guide me.

000 My satisfaction was great when at nightfall I came upon
142 this savage, who was about thirty-five or forty, and who was short,
157 fat, dark and ugly, but so happy and cheerful that he seemed like a child. [81]

I arrived in Necodemos at seven o'clock in the evening.

I was finally realizing one of my fondest wishes, namely, to see a savage tribe in its primitive state, exactly as it must have been before the discovery of Brazil; living according to the laws of nature and lacking all contact with the ideas of other peoples that might serve to alter its beliefs and traditions.

There are thinkers who do not acknowledge biblical tradition and who hold that mankind began its earthly journey in darkness, in the state of nudity and savagery I saw before me, and guided by the light of reason and by Providence climbed to the present state of civilization. This doctrine is more comforting than the one which represents man as fallen from a paradise of light and bliss; fallen, for minor sins that were not his own, into the extreme misery of these unhappy savages.

609 When I arrived, some eighty stout Mundurucu awaited me on the village grounds and received me with a display of open curiosity.

302 To me, the appearance of these men was no less curious, painted as they were with such identical designs that they looked like uniformed soldiers. Dozens of fires which burned on the square lent this picture a sinister quality, casting reflections on the broad, naked, bronze-colored chests.

609 I greeted them, bidding them good evening with one of
576 the few words in their language I had memorized for such purposes: "Chipate." They all answered: "Chipate." One of them addressed

554 and, even among the more acculturated Mundurucú, it is difficult to find out who collects the most rubber. This is [57] linked with lack of ego assertiveness, an important aspect of the Mundurucú modal personality.

Socio-Political Organization

Tribal integration

619 621 Mundurucú society was integrated on a tribal as well as village level. The foregoing section on the subsistence economy has demonstrated some of the economic bases of local cohesion and a further analysis of village socio-political controls will follow. However, to place the village in proper context it would be well to first outline those factors that unified the various Mundurucú villages.

It should be stated first that no permanent tribal or multi-village political controls existed. Each village was an autonomous political unit. However, warfare, patri- [59] lineal sibs, and matrilocal residence combined to unite the villages very closely. The self-conscious cultural unity of the Mundurucú was recognized and described by Tocantins who referred to the Mundurucú as a "republic."[9] The Mundurucú felt themselves to be a unit as opposed to the outside world. When speaking of another Mundurucú they said "one of us" or "person" or when referring to themselves as a groups they said "we are many." Everybody else was an "outlander," a category into which were lumped other Indians and white men alike.

9. Tocantins, 1877, p. 85.

476 siderable weight in deciding where to distribute the parti-
571 cipants along the stream. However, the usual small or medium sized party needed no central authority and the leader of the trip had very little to do except work along with the other men. His main function was to suggest the trip and to provide the timbó.

[224] Hunting was a much more frequent pursuit and no initiative was needed. There was no hunt leader, but the sagacity and prestige of the man who was the best hunter was always recognized.

[796] Even ceremonies were held under the organization and leadership of the man who originated the plan. It was then his duty to send invitations to the other villages and to supervise certain preparations that had to be made in the village such as food accumulation and the collection of ceremonial paraphernalia.

Those men who initiated group activities were usually older men of some prestige. Frequently this would be the chief or a household head, but often it was any older man having good standing in the community. The Mundurucú
● 157 were modest and retiring in personality. They were extroverts and loved to talk, gossip, and tell bawdy stories, but they were in no way forward or arrogant. However, certain
554 qualities gave prestige to those men possessing them. Among the most important were age, war prowess, learning, especially of the various songs, and hunting ability.

156 Authority was an unimportant concept in Mundurucú life. It was seldom manifested within the political organi-

726 burned, men and women killed and decapitated, and children stolen.

721 It has been said that, although individual warriors sought glory, the primary purpose of war was social and only secondarily the gratification of individual egos. The patterns of boasting and vainglory common among North American Indians of the high plains were absent among the Mundurucú.

[626 A young man who made great claims
554] of prowess was pushed to the fore dur-
157 ing the actual attack as a means of suppressing ego-assertion and not to validate it.

181 The suppression of individual inter-
577 ests in favor of those of the collectivity
579 of Mundurucú is consistent with the dual ethic and world-view of this war-oriented society. The joy and pride that they obtained from external aggression is matched only by the horror aroused by internal strife. A Mundurucú man never struck another in anger. If dissension arose, the principals temporarily avoided each other rather than show open hostility. Intragroup tensions did exist for a variety of causes, among which rivalry over women and fear of sorcery were predominant. The culture provided few internal cathartic mechanisms for latent agression, and, in fact, it enjoined social harmony most positively.

754 The execution of sorcerers was the
[689] only situation in which drastic action was taken against another Mundurucú, and the decision to kill the suspected witch had to be taken by the group as a whole. Sorcery and accusations of sorcery were common in all villages, and the subject was so feared that peo-

13: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1961 SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

DEVIANCY AND SOCIAL CONTROL I: WHAT MAKES BIBOI RUN

Robert F. Murphy

I

Biboi, the young chief of the Mundurucú[1] village of Cabitutú, visited the village of Cabrua with great frequency. So frequently in fact that he once made the ten hour round-trip in one day. Inquiry revealed that Biboi was on the horns of a dilemma. Though he was chief of Cabitutú, he kept a young and pretty wife in the house of his father, the chief of Cabrua. Whenever he visited his wife, his "followers" in Cabitutú busied themselves in plotting against him. Hearing of these threats to his authority, he would immediately dash back to reassert his position of leadership. But as soon as he was out of sight of Cabrua, the men of that community sought to tarnish the virtue of his wife; this was not a difficult task, and half the men of the village ultimately enjoyed her favors. Their exploits were well publicized, and Biboi, hearing of his cuckoldry, would hurriedly retrace his steps. During most of the time we lived in Cabrua, Biboi gravitated between the two communities--to the great amusement and deep satisfaction of his fellow Mundurucu.

On the lowest level of explanation, I have already stated what makes Biboi run. But the key questions of why the men of Cabitutú plotted against him and why those of Cabrua pursued his wife can only be answered through an analysis of Mundurucú society and culture and of Biboi's position within it. For Biboi was a marginal man trying to play traditional social roles to which he had not been socialized, and he failed to define correctly the nature of the role expectations or the values that pertained to specific social situations. His cumulative blunders finally threatened the stability of this small society, and certain processes were set in motion to reëstablish the normal flow of social interaction. Anthropologically, this is a study in deviancy and social control. Humanistically, it is a tragedy but, like many tragedies, one that has overtones of comedy.

II

Biboi's personality was most deviant, and I shall spell this out in terms of his manifest behavior, as it compared with the normal behavior of Mundurucú men and their chiefs. I know nothing of the socialization of Biboi, only that at an early age he went to live in the household of a local Brazilian who traded in the village headed by Biboi's father. He came back to live among his people, but he was no longer a Mundurucú, any more than he was a Brazilian. When I first met Biboi, he addressed me in backwoods Portuguese and in a swaggering manner introduced himself as "Biboi, son of Caetano [the chief of Cabrua] and chief of Cabitutú." This contrasted markedly to the diffident and hesitating way in which most Mundurucú addressed me, and

each other. Though I was an outsider, I had at the time been several months with the tribe and this departure from what I expected of a tribesman upset me considerably. Biboi turned out to be a great problem in other ways. He cited his own importance as a justification for the demands that he made on me for gifts. And he bragged continually of his ability to deal with whites, to lead his followers, to hunt, or to do almost anything in either the realm of traditional Mundurucú activity or in their relationships with the outside world. He strove desperately and openly towards the acquisition of prestige and of material goods, which he had accepted as indicators of prestige. For this reason our mosquito boots were admired greatly, as this would surely differentiate him from his barefoot Indian fellows--shortly after one of his visits, my wife discovered that her boots were missing. And we met no other Mundurucú so brash. They felt free to enter our house at all times, but only Biboi would demand a cup of coffee and then lie in our hammocks; he was quite offended when we pointed out to him that his body paint was staining them. Biboi had other most unusual characteristics. He spoke freely and critically of other men to us and did this even in the presence of third parties. Nor did he bother to conceal his hostility and contempt when someone inimical to him was near. But underneath this façade, Biboi was a frightened and anxious man. He would often confide to me darkly that "people are talking about me." Lest this be interpreted as paranoia in the clinical sense, I should stress that people were indeed talking about him, and Biboi had every reason to be anxious. Not only his ego but his very life was in danger.

III

Biboi's behavior grated against almost every single point of Mundurucú expectations regarding how a chief should act and how men, in general, should behave. Mundurucú society is intensely egalitarian and based upon the principle of maintenance of solidarity among a group of males who are conceived to be peers. It has a peculiar structure in that it is divided into patrilineal moieties, which in turn are differentiated into a number of patrilineal clans. But the normal mode of residence is matrilocal, and men generally move to the villages of their wives. This disperses the clans throughout all the villages, for a young man, when he marries, leaves the father from whom he obtains clan membership. It also produces a dualism of loyalties in which the man maintains a clan identity and, with it, defined role obligations and also acquires membership and roles in the village of his wife. This produces a classic form of organic solidarity, for the society is bound together by cross-cutting segments. But it is a very simple form of organic solidarity and an extremely brittle one. Social cohesion must be vigorously maintained and individual strivings muted, for alliances in cases of conflict cannot range along simple segmental lines. To support a fellow-clansman in a crisis may pit a person against his village mates and vice versa. In a society with a population of only 1,200, living in communities of 60 to 100 persons, such stresses are serious threats to social stability in any event; in one of the Mundurucú type they may be totally disruptive. The social system not only produces solidarity but requires it for maintenance.[2] Given the structure of Mundurucú society, the effective social actor was one who was cooperative, unaggressive, serene, quiet, and willing to place the will of the collectivity before his own. It may be immediately perceived that Biboi presented a threat to propriety and to the social system. He was belligerent, loud, self-centered and acquisitive--all the things that a Mundurucú should not be.

Like all people, the Mundurucú are, to an extent, prestige-seekers, but there are cultural differences in the coinage of status. The traditional culture placed no value upon material acquisitions, and, although this was slowly changing, Biboi's tastes were inordinate and clearly derived from his experience among the Brazilians. He thus violated a value standard and at the same time offended the entire community by self-consciously and openly trying to raise himself above his fellows.

Biboi not only misconstrued the ends of Mundurucú prestige but he also misunderstood the means for their attainment. The primary rule, and the one he most flagrantly violated, was that one should not seek prestige but let it come to him naturally. For example, bravery in war was highly valued but the posture of bravado was ridiculed. A coward was relegated to the lowest end of the status scale, but one who boasted of the damage he intended to inflict upon the enemy in the coming battle was ridiculed and placed in the vanguard of the attack. To attain prestige a man should be modest and unassuming, while observing all the traditional expectations of what constitutes valued behavior. But primarily, he should act always as if he had only the collective well-being and goals in mind. Biboi's braggadocio, individualism, and competitiveness had violated every rule of the game, and he won only dislike and contempt, rather than the esteem and power he wanted so badly.

Disturbing though all this was to the delicate adjustment of Mundurucú social structure and contrary though his behavior was to the values that bound this adjustment, Biboi had committed the cardinal error. He had allowed his grievances against certain individuals and groups to come out into the open and alignments emerged for and against him that cut across both village and clan-linked role commitments. Hostilities and latent factions are part of the tribal life of the Mundurucú, but they are carefully repressed--a requisite for the functioning of Mundurucú society. The average Mundurucú is well-trained in disguising aggression and in presenting the bland face of neutrality, but Biboi's own socialization was in part derived from Brazilians and was not adjusted to the functional needs of the Indian society. Like any cuckold, he had some cause to feel aggrieved. His error was in openly objecting to the offense against him, a normal course for a Brazilian cuckold but not for a Mundurucú victim.

IV

Biboi's alienation from Mundurucú society induced severe anxiety and intensified his quest for a favorable identity. He sought this through his role of chief of the village of Cabitutú. The contemporary Mundurucu chieftaincy must be understood as a boundary role. The dependency of the Indians on manufactured goods, obtained through the sale of wild rubber, has given the Brazilian traders a position of great influence among them, which they exercise through the chief. When the trader wants increased production he tells the chief, who then exhorts his followers to greater effort. Correspondingly, the chief acts as bargaining agent for the village in trade negotiations, and the people interpret his role to be in large part that of their representative to the outer world. If the trader is sufficiently well-established with a village, he can do much to influence the choice of a chief. But since he cannot completely counter the patrilineal rule of inheritance of

village men are ever-watchful and jealous of the chiefly family and would be quick to resist, however passively, what they considered to be high-handedness. Biboi, however, did not have the surrounding group of relatives that may have given even minimal support to his claim to leadership. Rather, he depended upon the trader and his father and relatives in Cabrua to buttress his position. 622 554

Given his delicate status, Biboi proceeded to worsen it through a misinterpretation of the chieftaincy. He had listened to his father's nostalgic tales of the role of the chief in times past, and one might say that he had some knowledge, in a purely cognitive sense, of the traditional culture. It is highly dubious, however, that Biboi had internalized sufficient culture to make him an effective actor within the system of social relationships. Biboi knew that "in the old days, chiefs were powerful men who directed their people and bought goods for them." This view of the past may or may not have been true, but it surely did not apply to the present. Biboi, nonetheless, announced at large that he was eminently qualified to be chief, as only he knew how to deal with the trader and only he had the force to tell the people how, when and where to work. I was a special recipient of this information, for Biboi found it most important to gain stature in the eyes of a prestigeful outsider. But Biboi also told all the others of his importance, and the people of Cabitutú stated that he indeed relayed the demands of the trader in forceful terms. His "followers" saw him solely as an agent of the trader in their village, and they were certain that his only function was to promote their exploitation and defraudment. Their analysis was correct, but I doubt that Biboi thought his role to be at all asocial. There is no evidence to substantiate this, for only he could tell me whether he was aware of the machinations of the trader, and he did not. But I believe that Biboi saw the trader as a father figure, many of whose values he had internalized and subscribed to as legitimate. And he also saw himself to be in the position of a strong and traditional leader. [157] [578]

Biboi had learned something else about the chiefs of times past, and this was the fact that many were polygynous. Polygyny was possible only for chiefs, for the matrilocality that applied to most of the population made it most difficult to have plural wives unless they were sisters. Even for a chief, however, polygyny was a difficult and stormy relationship, and it was evidently never of very great frequency.

Biboi did not have the implicit and unconscious ability to understand the fine points of Mundurucú social structure that a man raised in a village would have, and he made some of his most serious blunders in marriage. Soon after assuming the chieftaincy of Cabitutú, he married a woman of the village, a widow several years older than himself who, through the situational variability of post-marital residence, had a strong nucleus of kin in the village. Though I have no data upon which to make a firmer statement, it is quite probable that he married the woman--frankly a crone--in order to enlist the sympathies of her relatives. But Biboi was a young, handsome and virile man, and he subsequently sought a wife more to his liking. He located a pretty girl of about sixteen years in the village of Decodyen and brought her home to Cabitutú. This enraged the first wife, who berated Biboi, assaulted the girl and complained to her brothers. The latter expressed their disapproval of the polygynous union to Biboi, and the rest of the village supported them. Biboi's general behavior and his exercise of his "chieftaincy" had already outraged them, and this [585] 575 578

who had cuckolded him. The village reacted to his charges ambivalently. They were highly amused at his discomfiture and humiliation, but they were seriously concerned about the open accusations and threats of violent reprisal. Not only was this a breach of fundamental rules of deportment, but if violence were to break out the social system would be seriously threatened. The village soon became ranged on two sides. Biboi's family supported him, but the majority of the population were ranked solidly against him. Thus, the threat of conflict had spread from Cabitutú to Cabruá. And Biboi ran back and forth between Cabitutú, where they plotted against his life, and Cabruá, where they took more covert measures against him through his wife.

The balance of power and of moral correctness lay with Biboi's opponents, and the task of his supporters was made most difficult by virtue of the fact that Biboi had almost ceased to be a social person--the rules no longer applied to him. We left the field before the curtain fell on our little drama, but one could already predict the conclusion. This was seen most clearly when, shortly before our departure, Caetano fell from a palm tree and lay seriously injured for several days. Knowing that the people of Cabitutú would kill him as soon as they were assured of his father's death, Biboi came immediately to Cabruá and remained there until the old man's recovery was certain. During this period, Biboi approached me and said, "You know, if my father dies, I will leave this land and go to live on the banks of the Tapajós River." I asked him why, and, in fine Biboi style, he answered, "Because it is so beautiful there." Biboi knew that his life as a Mundurucu was finished.

ENDNOTES

(1) Mundurucú Indians are a Tupian-speaking people of the upper Tapajós River in the state of Pará, Brazil. My wife and I carried out a one year fieldwork program there in 1952-53 with the support of the William Bayard Cutting Traveling Fellowship granted by Columbia University, and a Research Training Fellowship of the Social Science Research Council.

(2) A more complete description and analysis of the relation between Mundurucú social structure and the positive evaluation of male solidarity has already been published in an article entitled "Intergroup Hostility and Social Cohesion" (American Anthropologist 59:1018-35, 1957).

(3) I have discussed the general structure of authority and its relation to Brazilian society in detail in my book, Headhunter's Heritage (Berkeley, 1960).